

**LE PEUPLE PREND
LE POUVOIR
THEATRAL**



**THEATRE
JOURNAL**

**PAR LE
"THEATRE ARENA
DE SÃO PAULO"
DIRECTION AUGUSTO BOAL**

**THEATRE DE FORTUNE - FOYER DES JEUNES
14 RUE CENSIER - 6^{ème} - DU 25 AU 29 MAI - 21 HEURES**

NEWSPAPER R THEATRE

The people take theatrical power

News and performance

The combination of news and performance offers a unique context in which to reflect on the ways in which both news media and theatre construct worlds in relation to our social and political realities

Sarah Jane Mullan and Sarah Bartley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024) p.21

Early forms related to Newspaper Theatre

Living Newspaper

The Living Newspaper as a theatrical form had its pinnacle in the early years of the 20th century. According to several authors such as Cosgrove (1982), Campos Lima (2014), Camargo Costa et al. (2015), Mally (1993, 2000), the starting point was the self-organized agitprop groups related to the Russian revolution.



A Blue Blouse troupe. Harvard Theatre Collection, The Houghton Library. Reproduced with permission.

Living Newspaper

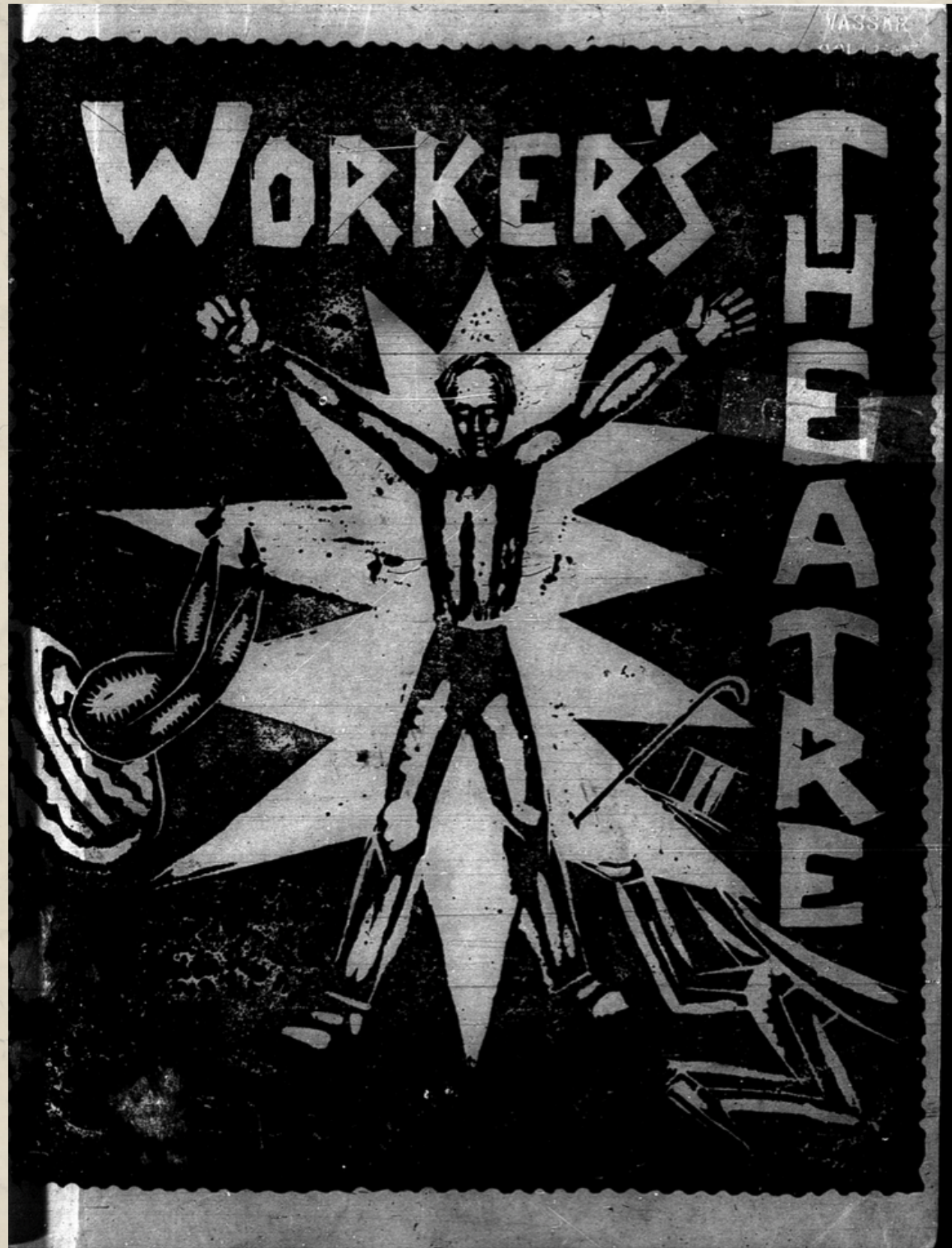
The wide development of the Living Newspaper within the agitprop self-organized groups in the first years of the USSR led the creation of Living Newspaper forms across Europe, USA and even Japan. The Blue Blouses were key in this spread: The first Blue Blouse troupe was a living newspaper group based in the Moscow Institute of Journalism, led by Boris Yuzhanin, which first performed in October 1923. In 1927 they had already made a tour through Germany performing one hundred shows for more than 500,000 spectators



off China" (*Ruki proch' ot Kitaia*). A Blue Blouse performance. Har
tion, The Houghton Library. Reproduced with permission.

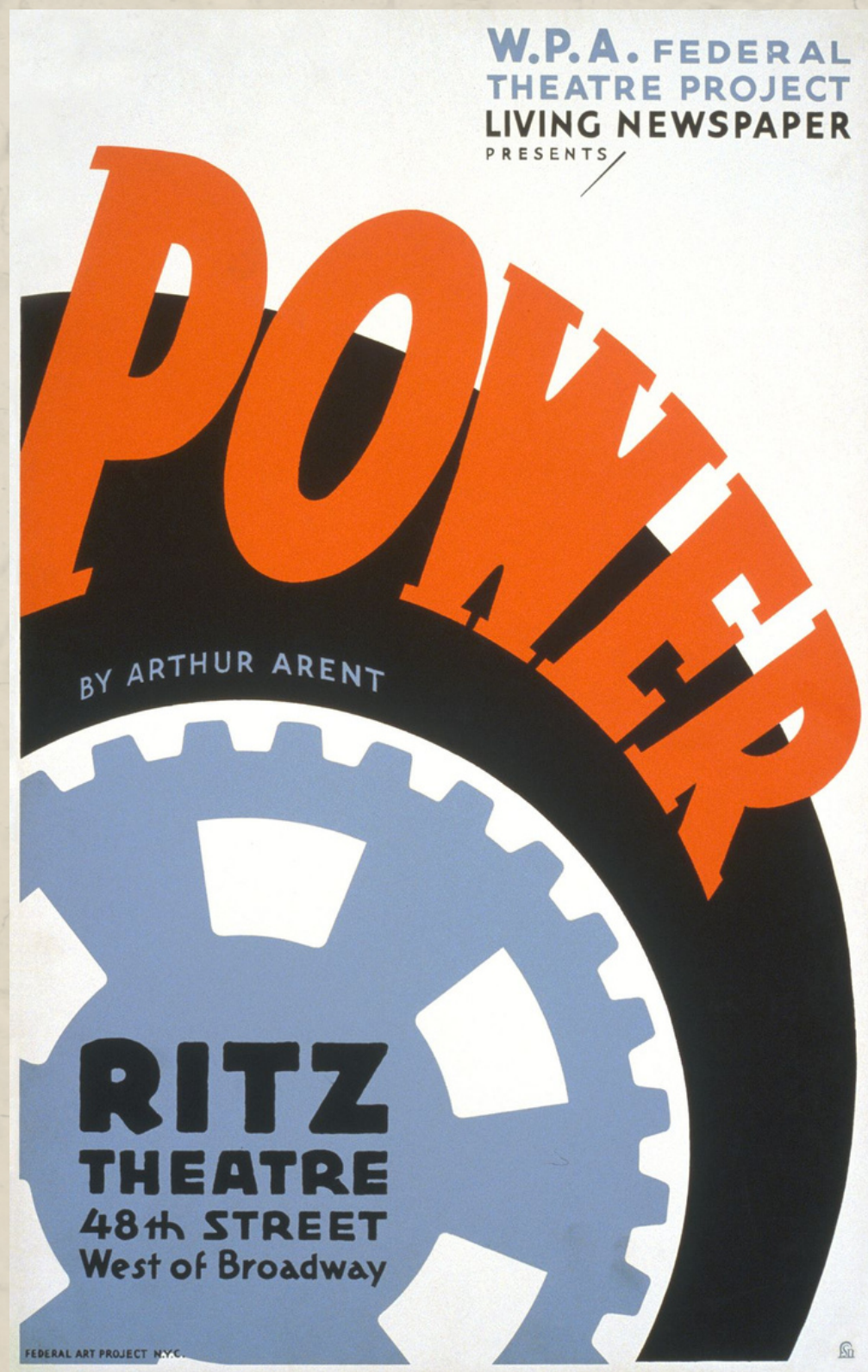
**‘Combine the newspaper and the theatre
and to hell with the traditions of both’**

M. Watson, ‘The Living Newspaper’, New Theatre, June 1936



The Living Newspaper expansion was beyond the continent and reached the USA. Although the Living Newspaper plays were known in the USA by the Federal Theatre Project, they had a preliminary and independent form through workers theatre groups.

They were connected with the Communist Party, and aimed to support workers struggles, like strikes or demands.



The Federal Theatre Project was created during the depression within the Work Progress Administration (WPA) by the government to generate local projects and support unemployed workers. Most of the unemployed actors were living in New York hence most of the FTP work was settled there. The director Hallie Flanagan knew by firsthand the agitprop groups in the USSR thanks to the Guggenheim scholarship.

According to her the Living Newspaper Unit **‘(...) seeks to dramatize a new struggle – the search of the average American today for knowledge about his country and his world; to dramatize his struggle to turn the great natural and economic forces of our time toward a better life for more people’.**

Timeline



01_1936

03_1936

05_1936

07_1936

02_1937

01_1938

ETHIOPIA
The State Department
in Washington banned
it

**TRIPLE-A PLOWED
UNDER**
HIGHLIGHTS OF 1935

INJUCTION GRANTED

POWER

**ONE-THIRD OF A
NATION**

It was dead at the hands of
Congress in 1939

UNITY THEATRE

established 1936

'Busman' based on the London bus drivers' 1937
'Coronation strike' and written collectively by the
strike's leaders

'Black Magic', post-war 1945 endorsed by the
Ministry of Fuel and Power, about the post-war
power crisis.

**THE
WORKERS
THEATRE**



UNITY THEATRE CLUB, LTD.,
GOLDINGTON STREET, N.W.1. Euston 5391.

Newspaper Theatre by Augusto Boal

In 1961 Odulvaldo Vianna Filho and other artists created the Popular Culture Centres linked to the Students National Union (UNE). The main activity was staging brief theatrical plays on the street, unions, factories, schools...

According to Campos Lima this was the first agitprop experience in Brasil

The dictatorship in 1964 ended these centres.

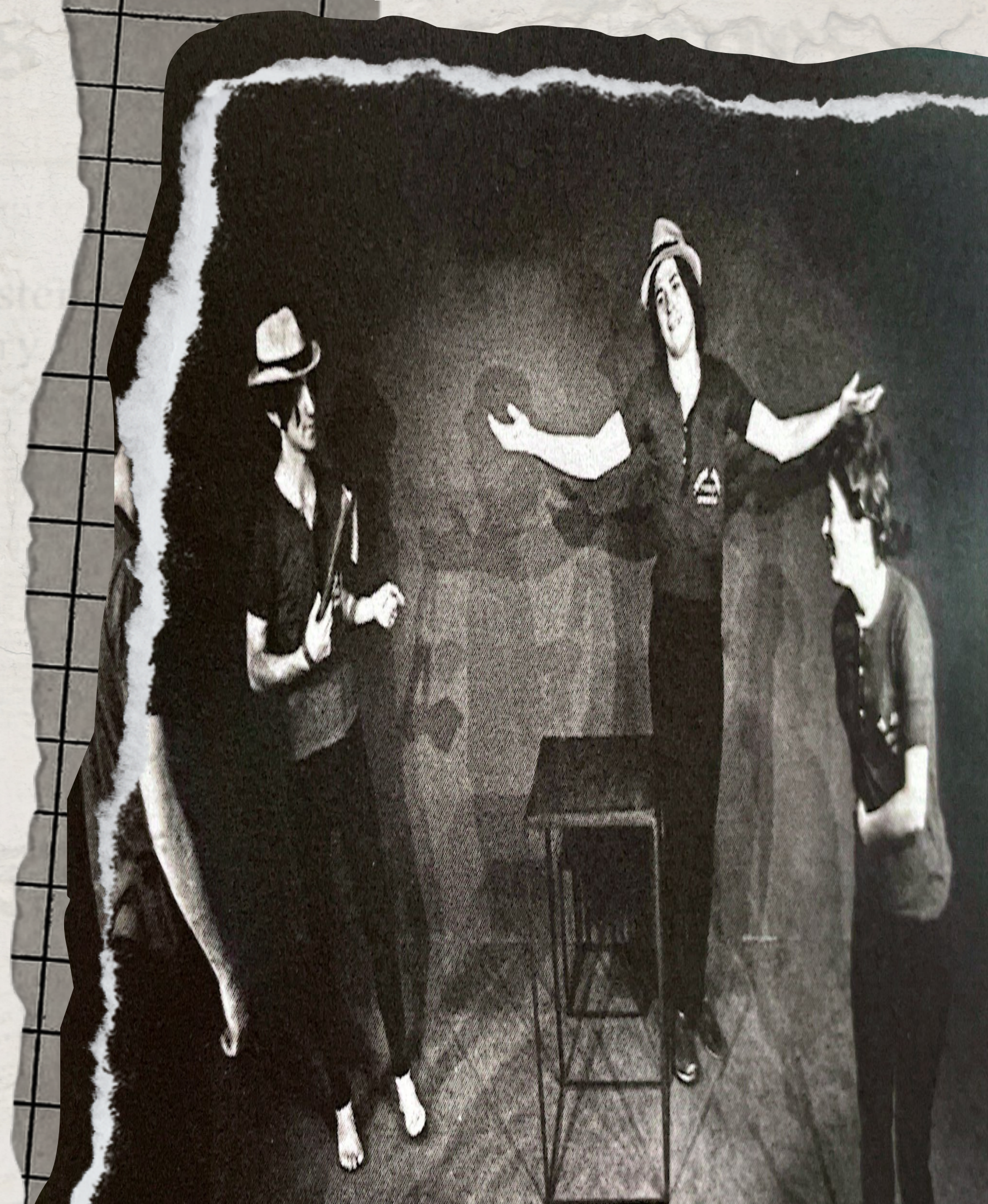


Newspaper Theatre First Edition

In 1970 a group of young actores trained by Heleny Guariba y Cecilia Thumim Boal, decided to continue being linked to the Arena Theatre.

They constituted a permanent nucleus of experimental work to investigate the staging of news.

This was spread to create other groups as a way to extend resistance against the manipulation of information by the dictatorship.



From newspaper to social media

Why Newspaper Theatre and other extremely successful forms of Living Newspaper were led behind? Is still a theatrical practice that we should maintain?

If Newspaper Theatre was developed to face the mass media manipulation under the dictatorship, what we need to address now?

If Newspaper Theatre was a counter speech strategy, what speech we need to confront now?

